

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 CU-04 DRC-01 /131 W

----- 041704

R 060256Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9455

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECT TEXT PARAGRAPH 5.)

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PFOR ID

SUBJ: SUMITRO'S SOFTER IMAGE

REF: A. JAKARTA 12711; B. JAKARTA 12266

SUMMARY: ON TWO CONSECUTIVE DAYS LAST WEEK GENERAL SUMITRO LISTENED RECEPTIVELY TO A RECITATION OF STUDENT COMPLAINTS IN BUNDUNG AND SUBSEQUENTLY MADE A SPEECH REAFFIRMING THE END OF IDEOLOGY AS A BAR TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. ON THESE AND OTHER RECENT OCCASIONS(INCLUDING HIS TRIP TO BURU ISLAND WHICH INITIATED A REEXAMINATION OF POLICY TOWARD POLITICAL PRISONERS) THE MAN RENOWNED AS INDONESIA'S TOUGHEST GENERAL HAS APPEARED TO BE CULTIVATING A NEW IMAGE. HIS INCREASINGLY SKILLFUL POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IS ALREADY HELPING TO SOOTHE DISCONTENT AMONG STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS WHO ARE ENCOURAGED BY SIGNS OF TOLERANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT ON THE PART OF A MAN THEY KNOW CAN GET THINGS DONE. END SUMMARY

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1. ON TWO OCCASIONS LAST WEEK GENERAL SUMITRO MADE WIDELY PUBLICIZED STATEMENTS CHARACTERIZED BY PATERNAL TOLERANCE AND WIDE-RANGING WISDOM OF A KIND WHICH ARE ALTERING THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF THIS FORMERLY HARDEST-NOSED OF INDONESIA'S GENERALS. DETAILS AS FOLLOWS:

2. AT NOVEMBER 3, INAUGURATION OF NATIONAL DEFENSE INSTITUTE (LEMHANAS) COURSE FOR ASEAN OFFICERS (ATTENDED BY A NUMBER OF NON-INDONESIANS), SUMITRO STRESSED THAT DIFFERING IDEOLOGIES AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS ARE NO LONGER BARRIERS TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. HE SAID GROWING AWARENESS THAT CONFLICT ONLY SERVES TO INCREASE BACKWARDNESS AND POVERTY OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR PEACE AT REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS. SUMITRO POINTEDLY NOTED THAT INDONESIA HAS A STAKE IN RAPID SETTLEMENT OF MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE WHICH IF IT CONTINUED MIGHT THREATEN THE GREAT POWER DETENTE WHICH UNDERLIES NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR NONIDEOLOGICAL COOPERATION. HOWEVER HE ALSO CAUTIONED THAT UNPREDICTABLY SHIFTING PATTERNS OF POWER AMONG BIG NATIONS WHICH ACCOMPANY DETENTE MAKE IT ALL THE MORE NECESSARY FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS TO AFFIRM THEIR OWN IDENTITIES (RATHER THAN TRYING TO APE FOREIGN STYLES).

3. ON PREVIOUS DAY SUMITRO ACCOMPANIED BY COMMANDERS OF JAVA-BASED ARMY DIVISIONS AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS SPENT NEARLY EIGHT HOURS IN INFORMAL CLOSED MEETING WITH STUDENT LEADERS FROM VARIOUS BANDUNG UNIVERSITIES. ACCORDING STUDENTS WHO CONVEYED IMPRESSIONS TO REPORTERS, SUMITRO ADMITTED THAT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND OFFICIALS NOT ALWAYS ADEQUATE, PARTLY BECAUSE SOME OFFICIALS WERE TOO "STIFF." STUDENTS PRESENTED STATEMENTS WHICH URGED GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO MAKE SURE OF THEIR OWN INTEGRITY AND NOT CAST ARBITRARILY ASPIRATIONS ON MOTIVES OF STUDENTS.

4. COMMENT: BANDUNG "DIALOGUE" FOLLOWED SIMILAR SESSION ON EAST JAVA(REF A) WHERE SUMITRO DISPLAYED FATHERLYFOREBEARANCE ON THE LONG HAIR ISSUE, AND IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ONCE AGAIN UNDOUBTLY SYMTOMATIC OF GOI INTENTION (WITH AN EYE TOWARDS THAILAND) TO MAKE SURE THAT STUDENT AFFAIRS REMAIN WELL UNDER CONTROL.

5. GIVEN THE FACT THAT HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S MOST POWERFUL LIEUTENANT, THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT SUMITRO HAS TO SAY IS ALWAYS INTERESTING EVEN WHEN (AS IN THIS CASE) HE HAS SAID MOST OF IT

BEFORE. WHAT IS EVEN MORE INTERESTING IS THE FACT THAT THESE AND OTHER RECENT UTTERANCES REFLECT QUALITIES OF MODERATION, TOLERANCE AND EVEN BENEVOLENCE WHICH MARK A NOTICEABLE CHANGE IN SUMITRO'S PUBLIC STYLE. THE CLEAREST EXAMPLE TO DATE WAS HIS VISIT TO BURU ISLAND (REF B), HIS WIDELY PUBLICIZED STATEMENTS TO THE POLITICAL PRISONERS THERE THAT THEY SHOULD NOT LOSE HOPE, AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO LAUNCH A NOT-YET-CONCLUDED REEXAMINATION OF POLITICAL PRISONER POLICY. ONE RESULT OF ALL THIS HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT OF SUMITRO'S IMAGE AMONG THE INTELLIGENTSIA, WHO FORMERLY FEARED HIM AS A BRAINY BUT RUTHLESS SECURITY SPECIALIST. THIS REEVALUATION HAS NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE SOME MEMBERS OF THE OLD SOCIALIST PARTY(P.S) GROUP ARE BEGINNING TO THINK SUMITRO MAY BE THE POWERFUL PATRON WHO WILL LISTEN TO THEM AND PERHAPS PUT THEIR IDEAS INTO ACTION. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER SUMITRO'S INCREASINGLY SKILLFUL POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IS THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ASSUMPTION OF NEW AND MORE PROMINENT POSITION (DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES) AFTER THE CABINET RESHUFFLE LAST MARCH, OR THE RESULT OF A CONSCIOUS EFFORT ON HIS PART. IT SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT HE IS CAREFULLY REMAINING IN STEP BEHIND PRESIDENT SUHARTO. WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR IT, HIS NEW STYLE IS ALREADY EXERTING A SOOTHING EFFECT ON STUDENTS AND OTHERS WHO HAVE MANY REASONS TO BE DISSATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC RELATIONS, STUDENT GROUPS, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, POLITICAL LEADERS  
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**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
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